

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE FLASH

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 217619

LIMDIS

TOSEC 5

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS TO SAM 86970

FOLLOWING SENT RABAT INFO SECSTATE WASHDC FROM TUNIS

05 NOV 73

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6214

LIMDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA/SECRETARY MEETING

BASED ON BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS RE MIDDLE EAST
DURING PAST YEAR, EMBASSY BELIEVES PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA LIKELY
TO STRESS FOLLOWING POINTS IN HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY ON
NOVEMBER 6:

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1. 1947 UN PARTITION PLAN SHOULD SERVE AS LEGAL POINT OF

DEPARTURE FOR ANY FINAL AND LASTING SETTLEMENT OF MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. BOURGUIBA WILL CONCEDE THERE COULD BE MODIFICATIONS IN THIS PLAN BUT THIS SHOULD BE STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AS HE PROPOSED LAST MAY WHEN HE OFFERED TO OPEN DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH ISRAELI LEADERS.

2. ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INTERESTS OF PALESTINIANS. THEREFORE IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BRING THEM INTO NEGOTIATIONS AT THE OUTSET. (BELIEVE RECENT TALKS FONMIN MASMOUDI HAD IN CAIRO WITH PALESTINIANS MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED GOT BELIEVE THAT PLO -- PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION -- NOW READY TO PARTICIPATE IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.) BOURGUIBA WILL PROBABLY EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS OPPORTUNITY TO GET AT CRUX OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND THAT WE SHOULD SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNIY NOW. MOREOVER, HE MAY OFFER HIS GOOD OFFICES.

3. BOURGUIBA WILL PROBABLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT RESOLUTION 338 IS GOOD BEGINNING TO SEARCH FOR SETTLEMENT OF ME CONFLICT BUT UNLESS IT IS FOLLOWED UP SOON BY SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, IT RISKS FATE OF RESOLTUION 242 OF FURTHERING STATUS QUO WHICH ARABS CANNOT AND WILL NOT TOLERATE. THEREFORE, HE MAY INDICATE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT ARABS WILL RESUME WAR IF REAL PROGRESS ON NEGOTIATTED SETTLEMENT IS NOT ACHIEVED IN NEXT FEW MONTHS.

4. IN THIS CONNECTION, BOURGUIBA, WILL NO DOUBT EXPRESS HIS VIEW THAT CURRENT DETENTE WITH SOVIET UNION CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR U.S. AND WESTERN INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND MEDITERRANEAN. HE CONVINCED SOVIET UNION HAS IMPERIALISTIC DESIGNS ON THIS REGION INCLUDING PERSIAN GULF AND HE IS CONCERNED THAT OUR CONTINUED STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL WILL ALLOW SOVIET UNION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DETENTE SITUATION TO INCREASE AND SOLIDIFY ITS STRONG FOOTHOLD IN THIS REGION BY POSING AS FRIEND AND ALLY OF ARAB WORLD.

5. IT POSSIBLE BOURGUIBA WILL USE OCCASION OF SECRETARY'S VISIT TO AIR SOME NEW PROPOSAL ON ME PROBLEM, IN THIS REGARD HE HAD ALREADY PLANNED MAJOR SPEECH TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MORNING NOVEMBER 6 WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL STILL BE GIVEN AS SCHEDULED.

6. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY, BOURGUIBA'S ADVOCACY OF 1947 UN PARTITION PLAN AS POINT OF DEPARTURE IN NEGOTIATIONS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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UNREALISITIC. IT REPRESENTS AN EXCEPTION TO WHAT, FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, HAS GENERALLY BEEN A PRAGMATIC APPROACH ON HIS PART TOWARD ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM (E.G. HIS FAVORING DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS). MAIN REASON FOR HIS GOING BACK TO UN PARTITION SCHEME APPEARS TO BE THAT IT CALLS FOR CREATION OF PALESTINE STATE, WHICH HE STRONGLY ADVOCATES. BOURGUIBA' REFERENCE TO 1947 PLAN AS ONLY SOUND JURIDICAL BASIS ON WHICH TO PEG NEGOTIATIONS REFLECTS TUNISIAN UNHAPPINESS WITH FACT UN SC

RESOLUTION 242 MADE NO REFERENCE TO PALESTINIANS (ONLY TO "REFUGEES"). IF BOURGUIBA WERE SATISIFIED THAT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS RESULTED IN ESTABLISHMENT OF PALESTINIAN STATE, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD WITHDRAW HIS INSISTENCE ON USING 1947 PLAN AS LEGAL POINT OF DEPARTURE. RE HIS APPREHENSIONS ABOUT US-USSR DETENTE, AMBASSADOR HAS SOUGHT SEVERAL TIMES TO ALLEViate THEM. SEELYE UNQUOTE RUSH

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